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The Playground

The World at Play



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The Playground

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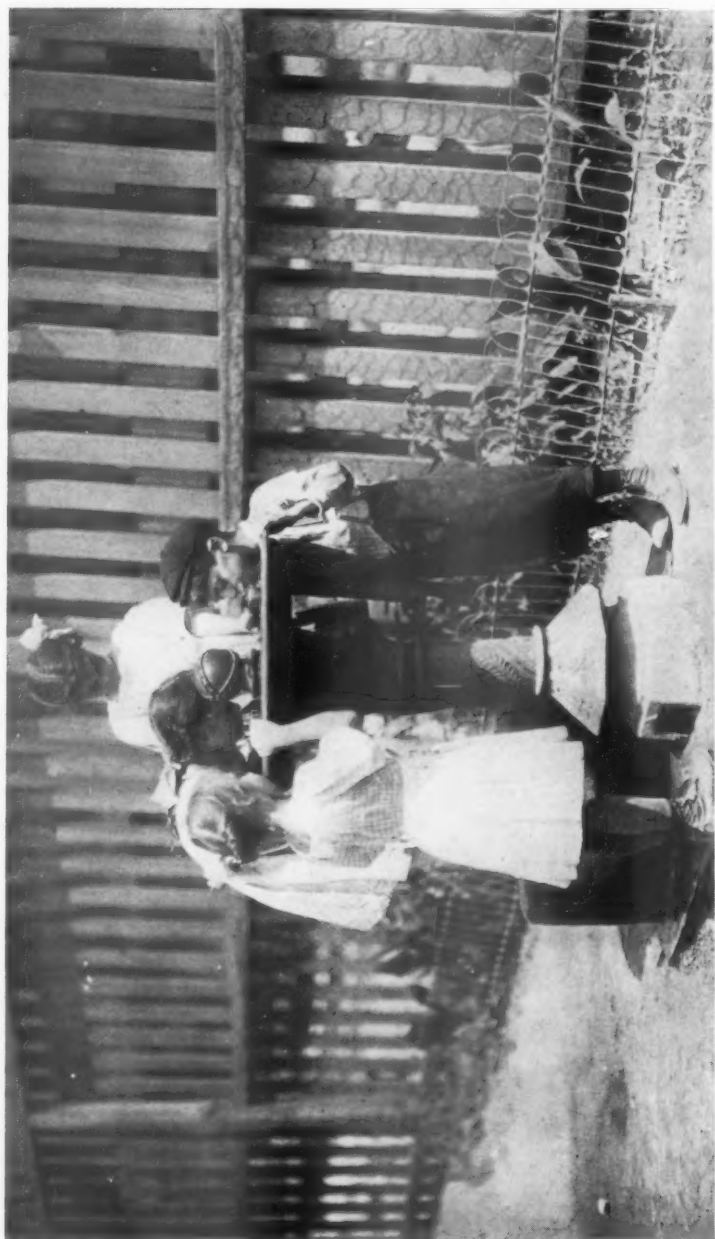
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PLAY MAKES THIRSTY CHILDREN

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH*

JACOB A. RIIS

We are told that a score of years ago the Commissioners of Education in New York City, after listening to a plea for the opening of one playground for the children, responded judicially, "If you can show us that there is anything educational in this play you plead for, we will consider it." The books, the buildings, the curriculum, were to them the elements of the education they were set to administer. There was nothing more. Froebel's notion that play is the normal occupation of the child through which he grips moral relations, grows character, the foundation upon which he built his kindergarten, was news to them, if, indeed, it was not rank nonsense. The old order changeth. There are a thousand kindergartens in New York's schools today and playgrounds in plenty, if never enough. From a play meeting held in New York a while ago came the cry: "Rather a playground without a school than a school without a playground." The pendulum swung too far that time, as it is apt to in the heat of controversy. We want both, each in its proper place; and let it be said at once that wherever there is a school without full and adequate provision made for the children to blow off their natural steam, there is the place for the playground. Strange that it did not occur to the old pedagogues to use their play as a means of barring one avenue through which the boy escaped the discipline of the school. The bad boys—the Henry Ward Beechers of their day who stood next to the head of the class only when it stood in a circle—were simply a protest against the grind in which there was neither soul nor sense that they could make out.

A New Bill of Rights There has been no more significant movement than that for playgrounds in the half century of revolt against the old order through which we are yet passing. We wrote into our national life a new bill of rights, the right of the children, of the tomorrow of the republic, to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Life—that is home, without which life is not worth living; and the battle with the slum, with the dark and desolating tenement, promptly raged in every city

*Mr. Riis was, at the time of his death, engaged upon the preparation of an article on the play movement for one of the newspaper syndicates. This paper represents the beginning of the uncompleted plan and is probably the last writing he did.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH

of the land. Liberty—freedom from the shop, from grinding toil in the young years that the flower of childhood might bear fruit in full manhood; and the fight on child labor took shape and grew. The pursuit of happiness—that is the child's play and the sum of it all. Therein is the soul. We have achieved juveniles courts, probation officers, Big Brothers to give them life. That was justice to the boy, to the community. Experience has taught us that you cannot make a whole man out of half a boy, and that when the boy is robbed of his play he is hardly that. But when we are told that sixty percent of children of kindergarten age in Boston had never seen a robin nor a dandelion with its golden halo, that there were armies of them in New York who did not know of the Brooklyn Bridge in the days when that was one of the world's wonders, and thousands in Detroit who had never been to Belle Isle, its matchless playground, then we are touched to the quick. The republic without the robin and the dandelion is a mockery and a wretched fraud. Laugh if you will: they and good citizenship are next of kin.

What Were the Children Doing?

There have always been those who had the vision as the child at the window watching the glory of the fading sunset turns to its mother: "Mamma, God can paint good." We have seen better citizenship in the making where the beautiful schools of today took the place of the grim old barracks; they taught us that there was in civic beauty a civic asset unsuspected till then: it helped ideals grow in the barren soil of the slum. And now comes the Playground Association of America and tells us why. In city after city where careful observations have been made, more than half of the children abroad in the street were doing absolutely nothing. They were just loafing. Thousands of them, asked by their teachers to write about what they did in the hours when they were not in school, had practically nothing to tell. They just "stood around" until the proverbial mischief that lies ever in wait for idle hands came their way and found them ready.

It was not strange that they accepted it; it was the only thing there. Moral starvation hedged them in on three sides; the gutter on the fourth. No wonder the soil was barren; we had left it to the sower of tares.

We heard the same story from London when they introduced the country holiday over there. The country at first made no

PLAY THE LIFE SAVER

appeal to the children; their souls had been deadened. Not until now did we know that we were so far on that road that does not lead to good citizenship.

It is well that we do know. It is well to be told that the shock has told upon our municipalities, that dozens of cities are bestirring themselves to acquire recreation secretaries with such zeal that it is difficult to provide the material. It looks as if the country were coming to recognize not only that a chance to play is as important as a chance to learn in the dull old sense, but as if the pendulum that swung too far at the play meeting had found its balance in the conviction that to have the children's play guided and inspired by the right person is as vital as to have the right school superintendent.

A century of city growth has taught us many lessons, and not least important the things to be undone. But with the public schools throughout the land coming to be used as social centers for the play of young and old and bringing back in practical shape the day of the town meeting that gave birth to our democracy, we have made progress on the whole. And what a stride, when you come to think of it, in twenty years!

PLAY THE LIFE SAVER*

JOSEPH LEE

President Playground and Recreation Association of America, Boston, Mass.

Work is life—or may be if it is the right kind of work.

This admission seems to overthrow the proposition we are seeking to establish, namely, that since life has gone out of work our alternative is play or die—I mean the alternative for grown people: we are not going to repeat our usual demonstration that for children the alternative is play or never quite be born.

Why is work sometimes real life, and under what conditions? I can best illustrate by going back to my old friend the kitten, whom I always have to bring in with me on these occasions. She has been chasing all these weeks a ball of yarn—dodging, leaping, pouncing, lying in wait, springing out on it. And then some day instead of a ball of yarn it is a mouse. Does her interest suddenly

*Address given at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City, May 23, 1914

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cease on such occasion? Does she think: "Oh, this is no longer any fun; it is mere work?" On the contrary, her feline soul flames up in her as never before, all her nature opens in full cry. At the touch of reality the last internal barrier gives way, and her full power is born. She becomes a hunting demon, a soul of fire, a spirit that outruns all possible expression.

That is work. That is what real work should mean.

And yet the explanation behind this admitted fact makes it a proof of our proposition that play is life, not a disproof of it. Hunting is life to that kitten because it is the fulfillment of her nature; the full wreaking of her instinct, the coming true of all that her previous activity had prophesied. It is the play element in it that makes it vital. The best work is the best thing in life because it is also the fullest play.

Work Has Some of the Great Play Instincts

And it is true that all work has in it some of the constituting elements of life because work fulfills some of the great play instincts.

People often, for instance in arguing that our real life is work, not play, cite the value of sticking to your job, gritting your teeth and plugging at it whether you like it or not. Certainly there is great value in that attitude—it is perhaps the greatest element of value in any form of occupation. But what gives it value is not the bread and butter result but the satisfaction of a great human instinct—namely, the fighting instinct which is the commonest of all the elements in play and which administers through play its severest and most constant discipline.

Is grit more cultivated in the spelling lesson or on the ball field, where, whatever the score may be against you, however sick you feel, you must still buck up and play the game? A boy with a broken finger would be excused from his writing lesson. He will keep on catching for the home team in that condition for eight innings, and not think to mention it. It is characteristic of the misunderstanding we are up against that grit, of all the human qualities, should be cited as outside the sphere of play.

And there is in all work the team sense. In every form of work—what constitutes work indeed—is the team sense of making good in the society in which you live. That in my opinion is the very definition of work,—not making money but making good. This play satisfaction in work can be brought in more than it ever has been. That is what socialism means,—getting the team sense

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into industry. That is why it is the religion of a large part of Europe at the present day. The meaning of socialism is that the work shall be your work, that you are not a hireling but a member, that the trade mark of the factory shall be your flag, and your personality shall be expressed wherever its goods are sold.

Something More Needed to Make a Life

But besides these two great strands of life which are inevitably in all forms of work, we need something more to live on. These do not of themselves constitute a life, though they make up a great part of it. In all our great games, besides fighting and the team sense, other instincts also find their satisfaction. In baseball, for instance, there is throwing at a mark, striking with a stick, and something of the chasing instinct. In football there is much of hunting, besides the especially realistic reproduction of tribal war. And so in the game of life some further element is also necessary. Kropotkin quotes the ordinances of Kuttenberg (somewhere back I believe in the 12th century), "Everyone must be pleased with his work." That is a good ordinance, but it cannot be carried out unless there is in work some satisfaction of the artisan, of the creative instinct, of the sense of rhythm, or some other instinctive element besides those of fighting and making good. If by means of trade schools we could so train the rising generation that all work would have at least three instinctive elements, our problem would be solved.

That is what we mean by a profession, namely, work that is also play, that satisfies not only the fighting and the team sense but some further instinctive element in our nature. Competition in the professions is competition not merely for a living but for a chance to live.

But, though there are among us many true professions, it is nevertheless true of the great mass of people in civilized society that their work does not constitute a life. And with the very best preparation, with all the means that we can devise of making it significant and satisfying, with all that trade schools and the Ruskinization of industry can ever hope to do, industrial work will, in the desiccated trades which make up the great majority of occupation under modern conditions, never be capable of carrying a human life. Adding up columns of figures, tending a machine, are not to man what hunting is to the cat. They are not fulfillments of human nature, and whatever we may optimistically say

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and hope upon the subject, they will never be so. In other words, life has in fact departed from modern industry so far as the great majority of people are concerned.

Work and Play Incompatible?

That life and industrial work are not compatible is perhaps best illustrated by citing the two systems of successful life that have hitherto been worked out, namely, the civic system as illustrated especially in the ancient city commonwealths, of which Athens is the type and the chivalric. By the systems of life I mean practical ways of living illuminated by an ideal—theories of how people ought to live, furnished with practical ways of carrying them into effect in daily life. These two systems differed in many ways. The one is ancient, the other medieval; the one philosophical, the other religious; one bourgeois, the other aristocratic; one civilized, the other barbarian. But different as they were in so many and such important ways, they were nevertheless alike in one fundamental respect. They were both founded upon the axiom that life and industrial work are incompatible. Both had at their base as the fundamental social arrangement the division of society into two wholly separate parts, practically into two separate peoples, those who lived and those who did the work—the nobles and the people, or the people and the slaves. (The word “people” was never applied to both castes at once.) In both systems the doing of useful work was held degrading, incompatible with inclusion among the living caste.

And these systems were alike in one other respect. In both cases the life of the living caste was to be secured through play. In the one case play expression was found in reversion to the aboriginal occupations of man, fighting and hunting. These alone were the occupations of a gentleman. From Nimrod to Roosevelt, from the time when William the Conqueror drove English peasants from their land to make the New Forest, to the days of Leech's pictures of the English squire galloping over the farmers' fields, hunting has been an occupation of the upper caste. Fighting has been so much the aristocratic form of industry that where aristocracy still prevails, it is a disgrace to acquire property in any other way, no title to wealth being quite respectable which cannot be traced back to some form of violence. The horse, as the necessary auxiliary of the hunter or the knight, gave the name to this form of civilization. The age of chivalry was the long day of

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the man on horseback, the age of the caballus, or nag's period.

It is true that chivalry included also love-making, not indeed valuing, still less emancipating woman as she is or wants to be, but putting her on a pedestal, utilizing her as a means of heightening the man's sense of his own chivalric nature. Indeed love of women, rather than love of country, was the characteristic motive of chivalric fighting.

The civic system on the other hand, found life for the upper or living caste not in reversion to the aboriginal occupations, war and hunting, that had preceded industrialism, but in going beyond it and creating new forms of play. The Greek citizen found life in art—"musike" in its many forms—and in the pursuit of science: that is to say in the three great play instincts of rhythm, creation and curiosity.

In both systems war and politics, the internal and external occupations of the gang found a leading place.

Finally, during the Renaissance, the Golden Elizabethan Age in England, the *Cinque Cento* in Italy, there was formed an ideal combining both systems—a combination unheard of till then, and one that must have seemed impossible at first, that of the gentleman and the scholar, illustrated by the bright figure of Sir Philip Sidney and of Pico della Mirandola. And that combination is the nearest approach we have to a practical ideal at the present day.

The Problem of Democracy to Find How All Can Live

But the ideals of these ancient systems, even the composite ideal of the two combined, cannot serve our turn. The problem of democracy is the problem of finding some way in which *all* can live. No plan by which a part of the people are shut out from all hope of life can be our plan. We can tolerate no division, contemplate no possibility of an excluded caste.

The success which democracy has hitherto achieved has been political; and the essence of that success—that wherein the real emancipation consists—is not in the freedom from tyranny or in the securing of better laws or better government, but in the direct expression of the team sense through sharing in political control. Another step will be the further expression of the team sense through the establishment of democracy in industry. But while waiting for industrial democracy to be achieved, we must find a way in which men can live meantime; and even after it has been

HOW FUNDAMENTAL IS THE PLAY MOVEMENT

established, some overflow will be needed for that part of human nature that modern industry so far as we can foresee can never contain.

Our problem, a problem never yet solved in human history, is to make life and work compatible. As the great majority cannot find true life in work itself—the sort of work that actually exists in our industrial society—there must be leisure as well as work, and there must be knowledge of how to use that leisure in ways that carry and express a life. We must all know how to play, and have time for doing it.

We shall in the system that we work out learn something from each of those that have preceded. Like chivalry, we shall preserve war and hunting, in the form of the fighting and chasing games. Like the civic system, we shall cultivate science and art. The method of securing this leisure and making this vital use of it in play is the present problem of our civilization.

HOW FUNDAMENTAL IS THE PLAY MOVEMENT?*

EDWARD T. DEVINE

Director New York School of Philanthropy, New York City

The economic problem, which involves such an organization of industry as will make labor efficient and productive and so make leisure possible, is of no more importance than the social problem which involves the development of the worker as a human being, as an expert consumer of wealth, as one capable of making a rational use of leisure time. The ideal condition is one in which labor is sufficiently severe for discipline and sufficiently productive for genuine enjoyment. Whether we shall get the benefit of economic progress depends on our standard of living and our standard of living depends on our leisure.

Character is determined where there is free choice, and it is in hours of leisure that there is the best opportunity for choice. It is in the choices and spontaneous development of our leisure time that new motives are generated, motives of industry, thrift, and rational budgetary planning. The motives, however

*Synopsis of address given at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Playground and Recreation Association of America, New York City, May 23, 1914

HOW FUNDAMENTAL IS THE PLAY MOVEMENT

humble, springing from an appreciation of the opportunities of leisure time are of social value. The desire to see a moving picture show may operate directly as an incentive to promptness and steadiness at work. Appreciation of a baseball game may act as an incentive to forego a slighter indulgence. Intense social pleasures grip the mind and hold it to closer application. Habits so formed quickly yield surplus revenue above the original crude motions and give an opportunity for higher choices and fuller enjoyment. Thus there is constant interaction between the economic nature and the social nature of man.

Of course it would be a gross perversion to assume that the value of leisure occupations is to be fully measured by their effect on industrial qualities. Work has many ends. Like play, work itself at its best is self-expression, a means of pleasurable activity of mind and body, but as work is actually organized in modern industrial society, a comparatively small part of it deserves this description. Much of it is compulsory drudgery, and for real self expression, for pleasurable activity, we must turn to the leisure time which is purchased by the sacrifice of work. Leisure, however, to perform its perfect function, must come under the rule of opportunity. Everyone must have fit opportunity, not necessarily identical opportunity or equal opportunity, although the nearest possible approach to equality of opportunity is desirable; but the ideal would be to give all "fit opportunity," as President Eliot has expressed it, "in infinite variety." If, within what is humanly practical, everyone had such variety of opportunity—for sports, music, social intercourse with congenial companions, books, pictures, direct contact with nature, and other rational leisure occupations, opportunities which involve in part education and training—then the real social value of leisure would become apparent. As yet we can get it only in fragments, but after all the greatest opportunity for those who would add to the content of human enjoyment is to increase the number and the size of such fragments, and to help piece them together into the social whole, which is our ideal.

PLAY VERSUS WORK IN EDUCATION

GEORGE ELLSWORTH JOHNSON

Professor of Play, New York School of Philanthropy, New York City

In the popular sense, play is what you pay for doing; work is what you get paid for doing. In the pupil's mind, play is what you want to do; work is what you don't want to do. From the individual's point of view, play is the thing worth while—work is worth while only as a means of providing more money that may be spent for play. From society's point of view, work is the thing worth while—play is a kind of sop helpful in keeping the individual contented in his work.

When you think of it, there is something very inconsistent and very unfortunate in these notions; for much of the best work of the world has not been done for pay, the pupil learns faster when he enjoys his studies, and the greatest of a man's achievements in life—his master work—is generally what he wanted to do.

The not very widely spread notion that play may be productively useful and work give pleasure, is not at all new. It is as old as Fenelon, Pestalozzi, Froebel,—yea, as old as Plato and probably older. Yet we who are concerned with education, who were long since familiar with the idea, are in practice forever dodging the issue. We believe in play,—but then, work must be done and we just can't fix our eyes on what must be done and play our way to it.

It is my wish to suggest that we have now come to the point in education where if we would but fix our eyes upon play and not upon work, we should find that we could play our way to necessary accomplishment better and quicker than we ever worked our way to it.

IMPROPER RECREATIONS*

SHERMAN C. KINGSLEY

Director Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund; Former Superintendent United Charities, Chicago, Illinois

One of the things strikingly impressed upon social workers when they come into intimate and confidential relations with the

*Extracts from address read by title at the 39th annual meeting of the American Academy of Medicine, Atlantic City, June 20, 1914. Courtesy of the American Academy of Medicine

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immigrant population is the distress they experience in trying to bring up their children under the new conditions.

The majority of them are accustomed to greater out-of-door activities in the lands from which they come. The folk songs, games and dances, the times enjoyed by the family together, are among the charms of life not only in Italy, but in France, Germany, Sweden and other countries as well. There, it is more the custom for the whole family to have their good times together. Here, the special places for the men in the way of saloons and other forms of so-called recreation, and those that appeal particularly to the children, help to break the family up and progressively to install disintegrating, specialized forms of diversion.

This makes the matter of present form of amusement of double consequence. It has its immediate effect on those who are participating in the different kinds of recreation, and it is also making habit and tradition which will descend to the children. It is bad enough to register the consequences of recreation on wrong lines in the bodies of those who participate in and make a habit of that kind of recreation. It decreases efficiency, lowers the tone, and is a losing game for those who practise it. It is at the same time insidiously confirming in the minds and practises of people in acquiescence and a demand for that particular form of city life. It is a distinct loss to any community to have it instilled in the minds of its growing children that it is an intrinsic part of a city to have saloons and brothels, arrests, disorderly houses, and a whole line of low tone, destructive, so-called recreation agencies.

One of the most hopeful developments that has taken place in our modern life is the bringing back to the people of open spaces, of swimming pools, field houses, playgrounds, recreation facilities of a wholesome sort.

As city life is organized to-day, the working man is unable to provide proper recreation for himself and for his children. It must be a community affair. Together the people must plan and make provision for this matter of recreation.

I once heard a man say that he felt it almost more important to know what the young men in his employ did outside their working hours than what they did while employed.

Family Recreation Abroad

By the very weight of present adjustments, the temptation is placed on the average working man to make a wrong use of his

IMPROPER RECREATIONS

recreation moments. Some of the most cheering sights that one sees in England are the bowling greens, the cricket fields and other places of recreation scattered about the cities, the working people after hours spending the long twilight in some form of delightful out-of-door recreation. Great use, also, is made of vacant spaces—allotments, they are called—along railroad tracks. Indeed, all the land about the cities is parceled out to those who wish to use it for flower and vegetable gardens; and as one travels about one sees hundreds of people—men, women and children, employed in this way during their leisure moments.

In the parks about Paris one will see whole families, father, mother, children, the grandfather and the grandmother, all playing together, or with employments and recreations suitable to each group.

In Germany, the average working man loves to spend his Sunday in the open air. In the large cities they start early in the morning with their whole family, even the babies. They take their dinner, the children their playthings, the mother some needlework. By train or trolley they reach some place in the country and settle under a tree in the meadow, on the bank of a river, at any place they like, for the day. In the smaller places where the open country can be reached more easily, they sometimes prefer having an early dinner at home, but the afternoon is spent out in the open.

Around nearly all the large German cities are so-called garden colonies. A big area is divided into small lots that are left for garden purposes. The single lots are sometimes only about sixteen to thirty-three feet, but the tract contains a little cottage or arbor, a small lawn and heap of sand as a playground for the youngsters; and in these places an abundance of flowers and vegetables are raised. Many working people seize this opportunity to have a bit of land of their own. These garden colonies are accessible, and every free hour on Sundays and holidays is spent there.

This observation has been made by a German social worker: "There is no sport that might be called the National German sport. It is perhaps due to this fact that Germany does not suffer so much as other nations do from the dissolution of the family. Until now, the recreation opportunities for the working people helped to draw the family together, and one thing that has retarded the more formal organization and specialization of sport

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is that it would tend to separate the family." Walking, bicycling, hill climbing, swimming, rowing, all are very popular in the countries abroad. They have paid greater attention to the care of streams and of water resources than has been the case in this country.

In England the Half Holiday Association is an indication of the value that is placed on recreational facilities. This Association has equipped country houses and places that make a desirable destination for a half day's walk or bicycle ride. Here, somebody is in attendance to act as host, and the fine old English places receive the people who are on the walk or the ride and provide meals or accommodation for the night.

An Appetite for the Open Air

What we want in this country is to create an appetite for the open air, for wholesome recreations, a love for trees and grass and flowers—for God's great out-of-doors. It is becoming more difficult to get such things, but out-of-doors is a big place. There is an abundance of fresh air and of sunshine. These things can be made available for almost every man, woman and child, if only the community appreciates the necessity. We need them and must have them.

We must stop instilling into the minds of our growing children that saloons, dance halls, passive recreations, are the right kind of thing. Vicarious exercise will save no one. It is not sufficient to sit around a prize ring or on baseball bleachers, on benches in stuffy moving picture shows, and watch somebody else in action. The individual must move his own muscles, must bathe his own lungs in fresh air, must let the sunshine do its work on his own face and arms. We want to give the out-of-doors back to the people. We want each individual to have the right kind of facilities, to acquire right tastes and habits in recreation, and to hand down to his children the right kind of traditions in recreation. It is a great thing for a nation to have the right kind of songs. Is it not fully as important that our recreation and play should be upbuilding, helpful, satisfying and ennobling?

HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN MADE HAPPY

BY ONE MAN*

An Open Letter to Girls and Boys Who Go to School:

Dear Children—Out at my house on Lindsay street, by the river, I have dug up about five hundred roots of my iris plants that I want you to come and get and plant in your yards. I want to make it easy for a lot of people to have some fun raising flags.

The iris, as you all know, is one of the earlier spring flowers, as well as one of the prettiest and most easily grown of all our flowering plants.

In New England, where I was "brought up," as they say down east, the iris is called flower-de-luce. In the south and west, where many of you were "raised," these fine flowers are known as flags! It is the national flower of France. The Frenchmen spell its name fleur-de-lis and pronounces it "flur-de-lee." It is known to the trade in seeds and plants as German iris, to distinguish it from English, Spanish, Siberian, Dutch and Japanese iris. I have never heard of any French iris. The botany books say it is a monocotyledonous plant of the iridaceæ family. If this description excites your curiosity as much as the flower excites my admiration, you will come out and get the four or five roots I have put in a paper bag for each one of you, to be planted right now in a sunny spot in your garden. The bags will be ready Saturday morning. The first one hundred girls and boys who come between 8 and 9 o'clock will get the bags, a chance to see a garden in action and a hearty welcome.

All you have to do about it is to bring a little letter saying that you will carefully plant the roots and tend them until they are big plants, able to care for themselves. Please let your letter say where you live and what school you attend. You see, I want to know how well you can write and fold a letter, so I can tell what kind of a school you go to. I want to know where you stay, so I can slip around next May or June and enjoy with you the dandy flowers you are sure to have if you treat the roots and plants kindly.

The bags will have in them four and maybe five different colors of iris, and, as like as not, I will throw in some lemon

*Published in The Daily Times, Chattanooga, Tenn.

HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN MADE HAPPY

(yellow) lilies for "brotus," or "lagniappe," as they say in Savannah and Charleston and in New Orleans.

Mine is the first house on Lindsay by the river. You will know it by the red and green hitching-log in the street in front of the little garden where the monocotyledonous folks of the old family of iridaceæ were raised.

I hope you will be on hand at just 8 o'clock Saturday morning, for we must stir about swiftly to hand out a hundred bags and take in a hundred letters in sixty minutes.

Your friendly,

EDWARD A. ABBOTT

FOR NOBODY BUT THE LITTLE COLORED FOLKS

MR. ABBOTT INVITES THEM TO ACCEPT ROOTS AND BULBS

While the invitation of Edward A. Abbott to go to his home and get a supply of flower roots and bulbs was extended to all the school children in the city, and while the response was gratifying to him, so far as numbers were concerned, the children from the colored schools did not avail themselves of the opportunity offered. Now Mr. Abbott extends an invitation to all colored school children—and to them only—to appear at his home at 8 o'clock tomorrow morning and get supplies of the roots and bulbs. He makes the whole matter clear in the following:

To The Chattanooga Times.

In my letter to "The Children Who Go to School" I said, "All the children of all the schools." All the public and private schools for white children were represented by the 150 girls and boys who came to my house for the iris plants and lily bulbs I had put in bags for them. They came in a pouring rain, in automobiles, in hacks, wagons, on wheels and afoot. Little and big ones came and each went away with a bag full of things with which to "have fun raising flags." My little visitors were all white folks' children!

The absence of the colored children is not accounted for by the heavy rainstorm; nor do I believe they stayed away because they do not care for flowers, for I know that many of our most zealous flower growers are negroes.

HUNDREDS OF CHILDREN MADE HAPPY

Believing they stayed away for another and very commendable reason, I am going to reward, as well as I may, their patriotic sacrifices by having another distribution of plants next Saturday morning, for colored children only, so all students of the schools for colored children are invited to share in this little effort to make our city more beautiful. The obligation to beautify falls with equal weight on all classes of our people. A city can make civic progress only through the efforts of all its citizens. The cooperation of the colored people is needed in this matter and I am sure they will not disappoint us.

The supply of plants for this distribution is limited, so I can promise only five iris roots to each of the 150 girls and boys who get to my house at 8 o'clock. I expect each child to bring a little letter promising to plant the roots and take care of them. The letter may also contain the name of the school which the writer attends, the place where the roots will be planted and, of course, the child's name.

EDWARD A. ABBOTT

FOR COLORED CHILDREN WHO WERE DISAPPOINTED

MR. ABBOTT WILL DISTRIBUTE MORE IRIS AND LILY ROOTS

To The Chattanooga Times.

It is bad policy to disappoint a child, say the child welfare people who have studied the young ones up one way and down the other.

The great fun I've had in giving away 350 bags of iris and lily plants to the school children has been marred by the disappointment of a host of colored young folks who came to my house too late and too numerous to share in last Saturday's distribution. I was prepared for 200 of the young garden enthusiasts, but was not fixed for the 300 or 400 who answered my call to get "next to the ground."

To repair, as far as possible, the disappointment of these children and to reward their zeal and patience I have made another raid on my iris and lily beds and have made ready another hundred bags of plants for those who found the way to my place, but went away empty-handed. So, only those who were here last Saturday and got no plants, are expected to come next Saturday to help me repair the damage a big lot of disappointed children

PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS

may have suffered at my hand because I under-estimated the number of people who want to plant and raise something good to look at. Come after 8 and before 9.

EDWARD A. ABBOTT

About 42,000 iris and 1000 lily bulbs were distributed, and Mr. Abbott says what was remarkable to him was that of all the children who came none failed to be courteous to one another and to him. A few days later he called a newsboy to buy a paper and the boy said: "My plants are all growing, Mr. Abbott."

The play movement all over the country needs more men like Mr. Abbott.

OAKLAND PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS

Report of the Recreation Department, City of Oakland, California

The Oakland Recreation Department maintains thirty-eight playgrounds and recreation centers the year 'round. Thirty of these are school yard playgrounds and eight are large park recreation centers. In addition to the playgrounds for children many sports and pastimes are provided for the adults. The recreation grounds are becoming more popular every day. Tennis, baseball, football, volley ball and folk dancing are the favorite sports for grown-ups. Social center buildings are available for club meetings, lectures, entertainments and dancing. Each recreation center or playground is in charge of trained supervisors whose duties are to lead and protect the children in their play and to promote and organize games, sports and other activities for all patrons of the grounds.

Good behavior is the password to all these opportunities. The playground is one of the greatest preventives of poor behavior and delinquencies. Many boys and girls who were difficult to manage at home and in school have become models through the constructive influence of the playground.

The following are some of the principal activities to be found in the recreation grounds:

Athletics

Both informal and organized athletic games of all kinds are provided on the playgrounds.

PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS

Five baseball leagues will soon start in the playgrounds and any boy who wishes to may engage in the national game. There are ten public tennis courts in Oakland which receive constant use during the leisure hours of the people. The courts are frequently used for exhibition and match games by expert players. Maurice McLaughlin, world's amateur tennis champion, occasionally uses the courts at Mosswood Park for exhibition games and pronounces these courts to be equal to the best.

Several basket ball courts are provided at each playground and leagues organized in which as many as five and six teams are entered from a single playground. Volley ball is a new game, but during the past year has become very popular. During the fall season football is given much attention, the soccer, American and Rugby games all being played. The Oakland and Polytechnic High Schools used the Bay View football field last season for practice and match games.

Field and track meets are frequently held during the spring season. Classifications, events and leagues are provided in the above sports so that any amateur athlete may enter, regardless of age.

Gymnasium Outdoor gymnasium apparatus is provided on nearly all the playgrounds. Here the play leaders guide the use of the rings, bars and promote tumbling, wrestling, and other games.

Manual Training On several of the recreation grounds opportunities for boys' and girls' occupation work are offered. Model building, clay modeling, basketry and raffia are the principal branches taught.

Small Children's Department Play leaders are required to teach a great number of circle, singing and running games to small children coming to the playgrounds.

Storytelling hours are occasionally held when professional storytellers from the Oakland Library Department come to entertain the children with tales about adventures, fairies and folklore. The sand box is always in evidence and is well patronized by the little tots.

Folk Dancing Folk dancing is an important department for girls and children. Almost every day on each playground classes are held and the children learn to dance the folk dances of the old and new world.

PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS

Clubs

A favorite method of handling groups on the recreation ground is by organizing them into clubs for various purposes. There are outdoor women's clubs for the mothers, older sisters and friends of the children. Groups of Camp Fire girls for girls between twelve and eighteen years of age, Blue Bird groups for girls under twelve, boys' clubs formed for numerous purposes, and dramatic clubs.

The clubs are organized with a president, secretary and various committees and are responsible for their own activities with such assistance as may be given them by the play leaders.

Any person may join a club by vote of the members, or a new club is organized when a large enough group is formed.

Field Houses

The field houses on the various playgrounds are equipped with shower baths, dressing rooms, toilets, lavatories and lockers. Clean towels are supplied for the shower baths. There is also maintained on each playground a supply of athletic materials such as baseballs, footballs, basket balls, bats and games. These supplies are issued to the patrons very much in the same manner as books are issued from the Public Library, except that all supplies must be used on the playground and must be returned before closing time each day. All these facilities are free to the public.

Recreation Center Buildings

Several recreation center buildings are maintained by the department and are equipped with halls, game rooms, committee meeting rooms and dressing rooms. These buildings are used for club meetings, dramatics, entertainments, games and social purposes. Free permits for the use of these buildings may be obtained by any responsible organization which will comply with the rules and regulations.

Walking Trips

During the summer season frequent trips (or "hikes") are planned and conducted into the nearby woods and hills. Many boys and girls cannot go away for the summer vacation, and these trips afford them an opportunity of enjoying the country without expense.

Festivals

One of the most interesting activities in the playgrounds is the preparation and production of festivals, pageants and celebrations. Every national holiday, such as Independence Day, Washington's Birthday, and

PLAYGROUNDS AND RECREATION CENTERS

Admission Day, is celebrated with suitable ceremonies upon each playground.

The annual playground May Festival is a fixed institution in Oakland and is looked forward to by thousands of our citizens. In 1913 the May Festival was held in Lakeside Park. Fifteen hundred children participated in the various pageants. About 10,000 people witnessed the production. The May Festival this year will be held on Saturday afternoon, May 9th, and plans and rehearsals are well under way.

Municipal Boat House

The new Municipal Boat House and recreational activities on Lake Merritt have recently been placed under the control of the Board of Playground Directors.

The Municipal Boat House is equipped with row boats, sail boats, canoes and large whale boats for use for crew rowing. Lockers and mooring privileges have also been provided for privately owned boats. Also, an excursion launch was secured to provide regular trips around the lake at a very small fare to the general public.

During the month of October (the second month of operation of the Boat House) 11,119 persons went out in boats. Of this number over half the rides were practically free, 2797 being in the form of crew rowing for school boys and girls and the balance in private boats, of which there are now 107 and for which there is but a small charge for storage.

In spite of all the gratis use of this aquatic playground of the City of Oakland and the consideration chiefly for the welfare of the public and in spite of the reduction to half of the former price of rent boats this new institution has more than paid its own operating expenses—and will continue to do so.

FINANCES

Year	Amount of Appropriation	How Expended	
		Maintenance	Improvements
1908-09	\$ 750.00		
1909-10	9,480.97	\$ 2,491.88	\$ 6,989.09
1910-11	19,769.65	11,658.51	8,111.14
1911-12	40,000.00	18,885.89	21,604.61
1912-13	50,000.00	32,390.16	17,994.90
1913-14	77,400.00	43,865.47	33,962.58
1914-15 (Present Fiscal Year)	77,839.00		

A RECREATION MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO

ATTENDANCE

1908-09	(One Month)	595
1909-10	(Eight Months)	11,125
1910-11	(Twelve Months)	280,165
1911-12	(Twelve Months)	432,486
1912-13	(Twelve Months)	738,805
1913-14	(Twelve Months)	978,569
1914-15	(Four Months)	508,135

GAMES

	Baseball	Basketball	Volley ball
1908-09	112	52	29
1909-10	1,224	365	1,002
1910-11	5,012	2,647	12,687
1911-12	10,563	3,073	4,371
1912-13	15,098	4,323	8,030
1913-14	28,018	8,654	24,274
1914-15	(Four Months)	14,963	6,031
			14,521

880 Sunday Baseball Permits issued July 1, 1913, to June 30, 1914

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

	July	December
1909	5	3
1910	15	11
1911	27	22
1912	50	49
1913	53	49
1914	64	71

NUMBER OF GROUNDS MAINTAINED

1908-09	2
1909-10	5
1910-11	9
1911-12	11
1912-13	13
1913-14	15
1914-15	38

A RECREATION MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO

A large number of the men and women on the Pacific Coast interested in recreation are co-operating in arranging for a recreation meeting to be held in San Francisco between July 5th and 10th.

The San Francisco Playground Commission, the Oakland Board of Playground Directors, the Alameda Recreation Commission, the Berkeley Playground Commission, the University of California, the Recreation League of San Francisco, are all represented. In addition a number of men and women have been asked to serve as members at large of a committee to help with

A RECREATION MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO

this meeting. Workers from other lands are being invited to participate.

Many of the readers of *THE PLAYGROUND* throughout the country doubtless know of those who have had valuable experience in the recreation movement who are planning to be in San Francisco in attendance at the Exposition at that time. It will help if any one knowing of such persons will send their names to Mr. Eustace M. Peixotto, 1058 Phelan Building, San Francisco, California.

AN OLD FRIEND RETURNS

Miss Marie L. Shedlock, of London, England, who was among the first to spread the glad word of the renaissance of storytelling to America, is again in this country. She will give a course of ten lectures with storytelling in New York City during March and April.

Another distinguished visitor in America this year is Cecil J. Sharpe, who has had so large a part in the development of folk dancing not only in England but in America.

BOOK REVIEW

BOYS' CLUBS

By CHARLES S. BERNHEIMER and JACOB M. COHEN. The Baker and Taylor Co., Trade Selling Agents, New York

A talk from practical experience is given in this book. Among the reasons assigned for the premature decline of a club are large and swollen treasuries, the formation of a new rival club, prolonged adjournment of the club, a weak leader or neglect by those in authority in one of the several activities of the club and cliques.

The writers recommend strongly the inclusion of athletic, literary and social interests in every club, as making for better development for the boys and a more permanent club. One chapter is devoted to girls' clubs, and the appendix contains a list of plays, topics for debates and discussion, typical constitution.

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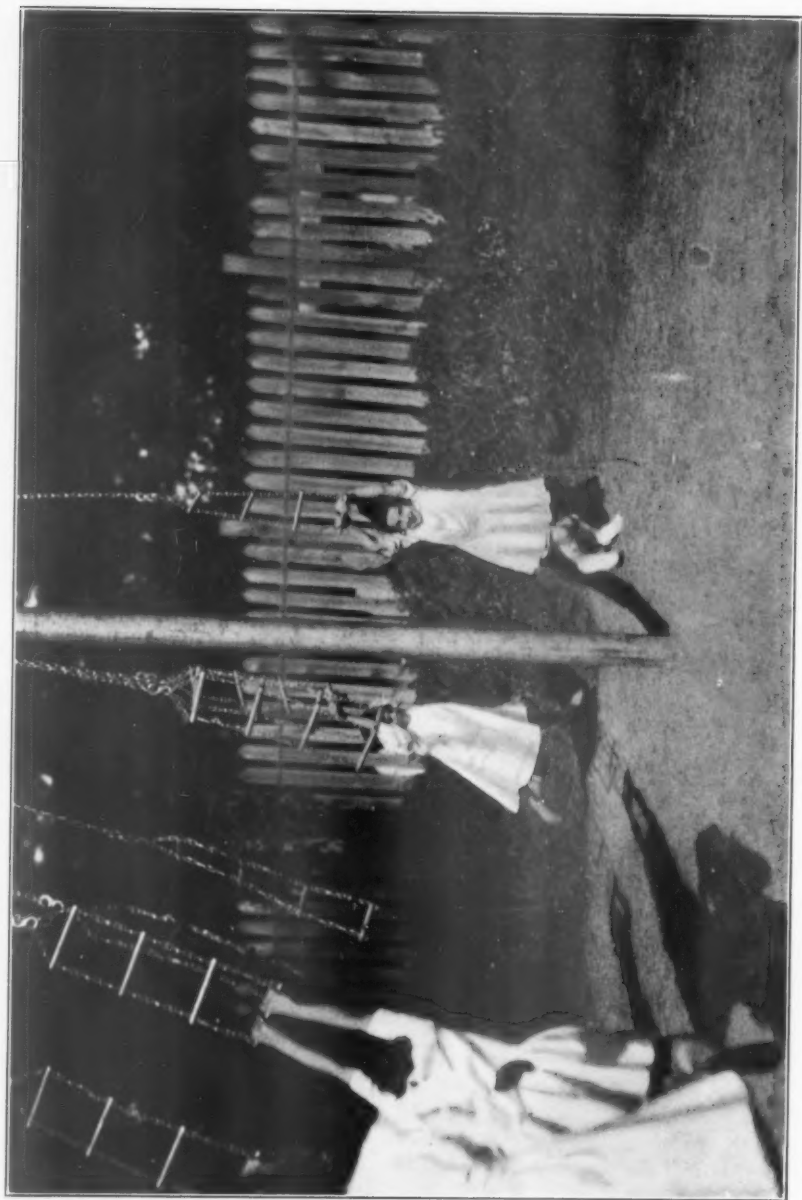
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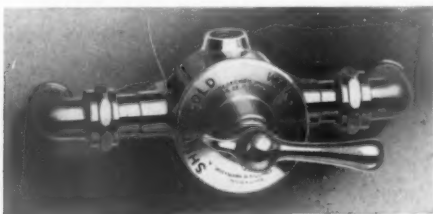
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WAR AND FOOTBALL WON'T MIX

Berlin, via London, January 7—The German army authorities have issued a general order prohibiting in future troops in the field from fraternizing with forces of the enemy, as they did at several points in the western theatre of the war at Christmas.

To such an extent was this fraternizing carried out that at one place, where the Germans and British played football Christmas day, they agreed to suspend hostilities for two days more.

